Miscellanea.

Buildings in Goa, India.*—*Old Goa* has few charms when seen by the light of day. The places usually visited are the Se Primacial (Cathedral), the nunnery of Santa Monaca, and the churches of St. Francis, St. Gaetano, and Bom Jesus. The latter contains the magnificent tomb of St. Francis Xavier. Altogether we reckoned about thirty buildings. Many of them were falling to ruins, and others were being, or had been, partially demolished. The extraordinary amount of havoc committed during the last thirty years is owing partly to the poverty of the Portuguese. Like the modern Romans, they found it cheaper to carry away cut stone than to quarry it; but, unlike the inhabitants of the Eternal City, they have now no grand object in preserving the ruins. At Panjim, we were informed that even the wood-work that decorates some of the churches had been put up for sale. The edifices, which are still in good repair, may be described in very few words. They are, generally speaking, large rambling piles, exposing an extensive surface of white-washed wall, surmounted by sloping roofs of red tile, with lofty belfries and small windows. The visitor will admire the vastness of the design, the excellence of the position, and the adaptation of the architecture to the country and climate. But there his praise will cease. With the exception of some remarkable wood-work, the minor decorations of paintings and statues are inferior to those of any Italian village church. As there is no such thing as coloured marble in the country, parts of the walls are painted exactly in the style of a small *cabaret* in the south of France. The frescoes are of the most grotesque description. One may fancy what an exhibition it is, from the following fact:—Whenever a picture or fresco fades, the less brilliant parts are immediately supplied with a coating of superior vividness by the hand of a common house-decorator. They reminded us forcibly of the studio of an Anglo-Indian officer, who, being devotedly fond of pictorial pursuits, and rather pinched for time withal, used to teach his black servants to lay the blue, green, and brown on the canvas, and when he could spare a leisure moment, return to scrape, brush, and glaze the colour into sky, trees, and ground. Very like the paintings is the sculpture: it presents a series of cherubims, angels, and saints, whose very aspect makes one shudder, and think of Frankenstein. Stone is sometimes, wood generally the material used. The latter is almost always painted to make the statue look as unlike life as possible.

Metropolitan Sanitary Association.—The acting committee of this association have issued an address to the public, recapitulating what they have assisted in doing towards sanitary and social improvement and soliciting support to the efforts now being made by the association in the promotion of further sanitary and social reforms. The objects of this association may be here recapitulated: they are as follows:—"To obtain through legislative enactments remedies for the evils which result from the present imperfect sanitary condition of the metropolis, more particularly those arising from the condition of the dwellings of the labouring population, the non-removal of refuse, the prevalence of public and private nuisances, the unrestricted toleration of noxious trades and manufactures, the defective water supply, the surcharged state of the graveyards, and other deleterious agencies." Aid may be rendered to the association:—"1. By promoting the formation of branch associations in the various parishes and districts of the metropolis. 2. By petitioning the Legislature. 3. By spreading abroad, by lectures and otherwise, a knowledge of the advantages which will be conferred on society through efficient health laws. 4. By donations and subscriptions." An annual subscription of 1*l.* 1s. and upwards, or a donation of 5*l.* 5s. constitutes a member. We would call the attention of all who are friends of sanitary reform amongst our readers (and the majority are so) to the fact that a dinner in aid of the momentous objects of this association will be given at Gore House on the 10th inst., as advertised in this week's Builder, when Lord Carlisle will preside.

Gas at Stevenage and Baldock.—At a recent meeting of the inhabitants of Stevenage it was resolved to appoint a committee and canvas the town for shareholders and customers for a gas company to be established in order to light the shops and houses, and probably eventually the streets. Considering the smallness of this *town*, as we presume its rising importance since the Great Northern Railway was opened entitles it now to be called, the undertaking is a spirited one, well worthy of praise as well as of imitation. Of its success there cannot be a doubt. In Baldock, a correspondent informs us, our predictions have been verified to the letter, a reduction in price having caused an immense increase in consumption. This little place began with 150 lights, and it now yields a profit to the company of between eight and nine per cent. The price, we hear, is further to be reduced to 6s. It was this success, we believe, which induced an inhabitant, Mr. Dear, to urge Stevenage to follow the example of Baldock.

Model Dwelling-Houses.—The scheme for the erection in Edinburgh of improved dwelling-houses for the working classes has resulted, we are glad to say, in complete success. The experiment was tried in Leith-walk. It was considered prudent to limit the operations during the first year to the erection of one row of fourteen dwellings, at the estimated expense of 1,260*l.*; but the *Edinburgh Courant* states that, from the judicious arrangements of the architect (Mr. Patrick Wilson), sixteen dwellings have been erected for 1,360*l.* Two of them contain three rooms, and the others two rooms. Every dwelling-house enters by a separate door, and they all have a supply of gas and water. Each house has a well-lighted scullery and sink; and the other conveniences are ample and complete. The drainage and ventilation are thorough, and each house has the privilege of a plot of ground. The annual rental amounts to 105*l.* 15s., or about 7¾ per cent. upon the capital. The scheme is thus likely to prove a safe and excellent investment, independent of its social and sanitary importance. For the completion of it in its original integrity, about 2,400*l.* are required.

Fall of a Bridge.—On Tuesday in last week a fatal accident occured in Jersey-street, Ancoats, owing to the fall of the iron-bridge there which crosses the Rochdale canal. The bridge was built somewhat on the suspension principle, being so constructed that it could be raised by chains, in order to allow of the passage of boats underneath it. A scavenger's cart laden with street-sweepings was passing over, and when it got to the middle the two centre chains, by which the bridge is supported, broke, and the links to which some of the others were attached being drawn from the bridge by the unusual strain, it fell into the water, carrying with it the horse and cart. A man fell into the water, and was suffocated. The *Manchester Courier* states that frequent complaints have been made, at various times, of the insecure state of the bridge. An inquest on the body was adjourned, in order to have some scientific evidence as to the cause, and, we presume, to ascertain upon whom lay the onus of keeping it in proper repair.

Light and Portable Couches.—A sort of *ne plus ultra* of handiness in bedsteads for behoof of military men, emigrants, tourists, hotel and lodging-house keepers, and occupants of small houses short of bed-rooms, has, by the powerful aid of angle iron, been invented by and registered for Mr. John Blair, of Irvine, Ayrshire. By an adaptation of light angle iron in the construction of the framing of portable beds and couches, not only is extreme portability here secured, but also peculiar facilities for erection and removal, whilst the constructive details possess great strength with little material. A bed frame on this principle, 6 feet 2 inches in length by 3 feet in breadth, when packed away measures only a little more than 3 feet in length and 2½ inches square. The weight of those already made is said to be only about 45 lbs. in all; and a still lighter sort, with a slightly different construction, is spoken of as only to weigh about 36 lbs. For camping out, a waterproof curtain is added, which converts it into a kind of tent itself. Excursionists may just need this sort of thing at the Great Exhibition; and, at all events, it will suit the lodging-house keepers to a T angle. The inventor, Mr. Blair, however, is one of those most useful and important public officers so much needed in England,—a procurator-fiscal, or public prosecutor—a highly respectable class of men in Scotland, but is not a manufacturer or tradesman: his invention, therefore, is not yet in mercantile hands, but might speedily be made available, we should think, if the metropolis become so overcrowded as many anticipate.

Conference of Co-operative Societies in Lancashire.—A conference of delegates from co-operative societies, stores, workshops, &c., held its sittings on April 18, at Bury. There were upwards of eighty delegates present from various parts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, representing forty-four stores actively in operation. The delegates reported the progress and present position of the stores. The reports were almost all similar in character, representing the societies generally in a prosperous condition. The reports lasted upwards of six hours, and the following resolution was then moved, and carried unanimously: "That it would be advantageous and beneficial to the various co-operative societies if there were an unity of action established for the purpose of mercantile transactions; and therefore this conference recommends the establishment of a central trading depôt." A committee of nine delegates was appointed to consider the details of the resolution, and report.

Bradford Mechanics' Institute.—The annual meeting of this institute was held on the 15th instant, the Rev. Dr. Acworth in the chair, when the usual report was read, from which it appeared that very little progress had been made since last year. A resolution as to the best means of increasing the annual income was moved, when Mr. Sichel deprecated the idea of the institute going "cap in hand" begging for support, and contended that, in order to progress, or even maintain its ground, it must be made of a more attractive character, and more in accordance with the growing wants and taste of the age. He asked why working people did not come to the Mechanics' Institute for their information, instead of getting it at the ale-house? He predicted that, unless the institute were modified in its character, the erection of St. George's Hall and the establishment of cheap concerts, would reduce the number of their members. He strongly recommended that the institute should partake more of the *Athenæum* character; that its meetings should assume more the form of social gatherings, and the institute itself more resemble a working man's club. Another member complained that the lectures were not more of a recreative character, and another that the reading-room had no newspapers.

A Californian Bonded Warehouse made in Staffordshire.—A San Francisco newspaper contains a rude woodcut representation of a bonded warehouse lately erected on one of the wharfs in the city, and made a few months ago at the Horsley Ironworks, Tipton. It is four stories high, the dimensions being 26 feet frontage, 101 feet deep, and 45 feet high: it weighs 500 tons, and is designed to store 2,400 tons of goods. An ornamental spiral staircase forms the means of communication from the lower to the upper stories. The outside has more substantiality than elegance, but the graces of architecture, it is said, have not been altogether lost sight of. Its erection occupied only eleven weeks; and it is stated that the castings were shipped in six weeks after the order reached England. Its cost, including freight, duties, and pile driving, was about 75,000 dollars. The whole is of iron, without even a stick of wood in its construction.

* From Burton's "*Goa and the Blue Mountains*." Bentley.

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